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Introduction to legal  
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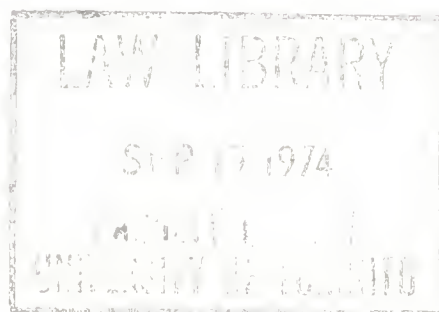
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INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL MATERIALS

FACULTY OF LAW LIBRARY,  
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The purpose of the following pages is to provide a basic background for students in the use of legal materials. It is not intended as an exhaustive survey but simply as an introduction.





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## INTRODUCTION

Legal material are divided into two main categories--primary and secondary sources. A primary source is one which states the law and is formulated by an individual or body having authority to declare or to make law. Statutes and cases are the main Canadian primary sources. Others are statutory regulations, orders-in-council and the decisions of boards and tribunals. Secondary sources may be divided into two categories: firstly, guides for finding primary material, such as abridgments, digests, encyclopaedias and citators; and secondly, commentaries on the primary sources, such as textbooks, legal periodical literature and case comments.

## PRIMARY SOURCES OF LAW

### LAW REPORTS

Law reports record case law. The term case law refers to law based on judicial decision. Over the years a systematic method of reporting cases has developed. Reference can be made to the law reports to determine what the courts have done in the past and are likely to do in the future in relation to a particular legal problem. Our courts adhere to the doctrine of stare decisis which in effect states that decisions of a higher court in any

